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X Dec 2 A.E. STEVENS  
ON  
X Dec 2 U-2

## The Important Item Is The Hard Lesson: Their Word Isn't Worth A Thin Kopek

Whether or not President Kennedy reposes full confidence in Adlai Stevenson may be the news of the now celebrated article in the *Saturday Evening Post*. A good guess, based largely on the way Washington works, is that Mr. Stevenson is being shunted to the sidelines.

news or not, the significance of part Alsop's and Charles Bartlett's lies in another direction — in the full exposure of the Soviet plot to deceive the President and the State Department on their intent. For what they intended to do, their planning began last spring. In full swing, it involved 175 ships, 6,000 men and an investment of three-quarters of a billion dollars.

Working on so vast a scale, they could scarcely hope to go undetected. But they did hope to be misunderstood. Again and again, by every diplomatic means available they undertook to assure the United States that their arms were purely defensive and their intent pacific. In short, they lied and they lied again and they kept on lying until well after the CIA had positive proof of their lies.

Ironically, it was the U-2, for whose use the President once severely criticized his predecessor and suggested an apology, that saved the day. As a result, even when Andrei Gromyko was assuring the President that the United States had nothing to fear from the Soviet base in Cuba, the President knew that Washington was within easy range of Soviet missiles.

Thereafter, the story is more encouraging. The more he learned, the firmer the President grew until at last the United States took the hard line that, if the Soviets wanted a war over Cuba, it might as well find it out in October as next April.

Whether Mr. Stevenson is "soft" on this point is a relatively minor matter. What is important is that the President seems to have learned what everyone must learn in dealing with the Soviets: One may talk with them from now until doomsday, but one dare not take them at their word. It isn't worth a kopek — or whatever is the Russian word for worthlessness.